

Choosing a CMS for the Future of Ecommerce

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For modern enterprises, the CMS is the foundation to create and shape their digital presence and marketing campaigns. The choice of CMS strongly influences whether brands can do this successfully or not. Not only does the CMS need to cater to the organization's needs, but it must also allow internal teams to create experiences that their customers want in today's digital world.

After all, consumers demand from companies more than ever to provide experiences that are convenient, engaging, and fast. This becomes even more relevant in the context of ecommerce.

With an assortment of options to find the products they want, consumers have plenty of choices. As a result, convenience has become a determining factor in whether or not a customer buys from a particular brand. In fact, 52% of shoppers are likely to avoid purchasing from businesses that can't provide them the convenience they expect.

To stand out from the competition and showcase your brand as the right choice for consumers, you need to deliver experiences that are tailored to their needs, on the channel they choose, and when they need them.

Unfortunately, many organizations find themselves under-equipped to create modern ecommerce experiences that intertwine content with shopping to provide a seamless and personalized experience for consumers across channels. This inability is most often due to outdated technology or difficulty integrating disparate systems.

This frequently results in a shop that seems disjointed from the brand website, frustrated marketers that can't create a cohesive digital experience, and businesses that fail to capitalize on the almost \$5 trillion made through retail ecommerce sales worldwide.

The good news is: there is a solution.

In this guide, we'll explain:

- The challenges brands face when attempting to deliver modern commerce experiences
- The tools your teams need to overcome these challenges
- How a headless architecture can provide the foundation your brand needs

The Challenge of Modern Commerce

You need to provide your customers with a seamless experience that looks the same regardless of whether they're browsing your website or shop and regardless of whether they're using a desktop computer, mobile device, or tablet. Customers also expect that when they click on a product ad on social media, they don't struggle to find the product on your website. To create these modern commerce experiences, some technological challenges must be overcome:

Outdated Systems

Legacy systems have remained in operation at many enterprise companies. For one reason, companies find that they can continue doing what they've always been doing; marketers can easily edit content on the website, and developers can push new templates to the site without much fanfare.

Unfortunately, while these legacy systems may seem sufficient to do the job they've always done, they can stifle organizations seeking to innovate and embark on digital transformation. Legacy infrastructure can result in high maintenance costs with not much reward, increasing time to market for new ecommerce campaigns as IT teams grapple with the challenges of integrating new technologies. This lowers productivity and limits the agility required for modern ecommerce experiences.

Limitations of Single Systems

Another set of challenges inhibiting cohesive commerce experiences are the limitations of single systems. Modern ecommerce platforms are built to provide functionality such as product catalogs, inventory management, and access to payment gateways. And while some of these systems do provide capabilities for editing websites, they are not built to provide the full spectrum of functionality to create digital experiences.

An ecommerce platform needs to be able to connect to a CMS so that content and commerce can be delivered to multiple channels while foundational ecommerce functionality remains separate. Otherwise, you limit the experiences you can create, and marketers cannot seamlessly combine your website and shop, or leverage features such as personalization that helps enhance your buyers' experience.

What Developers And Marketers Need

Creating content and commerce experiences requires developers and marketers to work together. As the primary departments using the CMS, marketing and IT each have their own unique needs. To help them create the digital commerce experience that best fits your brand, you need to ensure that your CMS has a few key characteristics.

What Marketers Need

Marketers will be the primary users creating and publishing the content that makes up digital experiences. It's up to them to create content and campaigns for the website and shop and ensure that it aligns. Here are some of the features that can help them achieve this:

Intuitive Interface



As non-technical users, many marketers grew accustomed to the easy-to-use interfaces of traditional CMSs. As a result, any platform that replaces these legacy systems must be able to provide visual editing as well as in-context previews that allow marketers to easily create digital experiences leveraging product data from the ecommerce system. They must also be able to easily create landing pages, microsites, and other content assets that help enhance the customer experience ideally without having to involve developers in the process.

Personalization



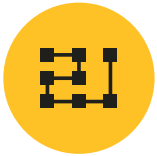
In the world of ecommerce, personalization is essential for businesses to create the most effective content to drive engagement and sales. However, minor personalization that simply remembers a customer's name won't cut it. Marketers need to be able to use data to customize content based on previous shopping behaviors and habits, easily create segmented audiences, and tailor content to best suit customer needs.

Localization



Ecommerce has removed the silos that restricted when and where customers can do their shopping. As a result, brands have customers from all over the world and must be able to offer content that meets their needs. The CMS has to enable marketers to easily localize content, providing the experience in multiple languages.

Workflows



Managing a brand website and an ecommerce shop together means that marketers need the proper workflows to ensure that content remains consistent and of the highest quality. The CMS should facilitate workflows that include multiple personnel while also enabling editors to roll back to previous versions of content easily.

Analytics

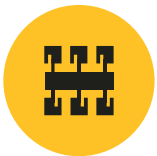


Knowing how many visitors are coming to your shop, the channels they are entering from, and whether or not they are proceeding to checkout with the items in their cart is essential. Marketers should be able to easily monitor analytics for each site, allowing them to know whether to optimize content for a specific customer segment or create entirely new content campaigns altogether to help drive sales.

What Developers Need

With so many moving parts that make up the ecommerce ecosystem, it's essential that these technologies are properly integrated, and everything runs smoothly. To accomplish this, developers and IT staff require a few key capabilities.

Open Architecture



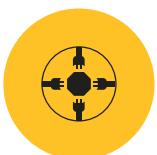
Ecommerce will continue to evolve and require brands to add new technologies and make changes to their existing systems to cope. However, companies shouldn't have to undergo a complete re-platform every time. With an open and modular architecture, it becomes easier for developers to add, upgrade, or swap components that complement their platform.

Robust APIs



To facilitate content delivery to multiple channels, ensure the seamless transition between each digital touchpoint, and create the omnichannel shopping experiences that customers desire, APIs are a necessity. With robust APIs, brands can easily deliver content experiences to mobile devices, digital kiosks, smart speakers, and more, while allowing consumers to shop on each channel feeling like they're shopping with the same brand.

Flexible Integrations



The ecommerce ecosystem is vast when you look under the hood and see the number of tools that help power an engaging front-end experience. CRM, PIM, CMS, ERP, analytics, marketing automation, and more systems help internal teams manage the ecommerce experience, and these tools must be easily integrated. Developers need a CMS that enables a best-of-breed approach to choose the ideal technologies that fit the stack.

How a Headless Architecture Helps

To facilitate digital commerce experiences that combine content and commerce well, you need a headless CMS that easily integrates with your ecommerce platform. Here are some of the ways headless architecture helps businesses provide the right tools for their developers and marketers alike.

Flexibility

An important motivation for choosing the headless commerce approach is giving developers the freedom to work with technologies that they know and like, such as React, Vue, Angular, or the Jamstack, for example, without being limited by what comes with the CMS or commerce system.

The open architecture of a headless CMS also provides your brand with the flexibility to connect any technology, from those currently in use to those that haven't been invented yet. This allows your brand to no longer be restricted by a monolithic architecture or changing technologies and enables you to embrace innovation.

Omnichannel CX

To give your customers a unified and seamless shopping experience across channels, you want all of your channels to connect to one content hub and commerce system. Besides that, it's also a lot more straightforward for you to manage.

Performance

The decoupled architecture of the headless approach allows you to better optimize your storefronts' load time. This has a strong and direct impact on conversion and SEO. To improve site performance, check out Static Site Generation (SSG) or the Jamstack architecture, for example.

Magnolia: Facilitating A Modern Ecommerce Experience

Facilitating the seamless digital experiences that customers desire while ensuring that the brand website and shop are completely intertwined or at least compatible requires a platform that goes beyond a traditional CMS or commerce system.

Magnolia provides a digital experience platform (DXP) that makes it easy to integrate with a powerful ecommerce system and orchestrate the shopping experiences that customers crave.

Commerce Connector

Ecommerce systems don't provide the tools for marketers to manage content experiences and campaigns. With an integration framework and pre-built connectors for major ecommerce platforms like BigCommerce, Salesforce, and commercetools, Magnolia simplifies the process of connecting your CMS to your ecommerce platform. This allows you to adequately support modern commerce experiences and enables you to manage content and commerce with convenience.

Easy Authoring

WYSIWYG editing in Magnolia's visual editor allows your marketing colleagues to design and control experiences built with React, Vue, Angular, and other front-end frameworks, allowing you to easily add a marketing campaign in the shop, and streamlining the commerce experience for customers no matter how they browse and explore.

Headless Accelerator

Magnolia's Headless Accelerator provides a set of ready-made web components such as navigation or breadcrumbs that simplify the delivery of commerce experiences. This helps your teams to create front-end experiences, speeding up time to market, lowering costs, and allows you to easily reuse components to ensure consistency across the entire customer journey.

Integrations

Magnolia's Connector Packs and APIs enable easy integrations with other systems such as your analytics, DAM, CRM, and PIM systems. This allows you to combine external content and data, such as digital assets and customer data, to intelligently design the experience.

Sainsbury's is changing multi-channel retail with Magnolia

Sainsbury's is one of Britain's most loved supermarkets that helps shoppers 'Live Well For Less'. Behind the scenes, their digital team supports over 1,500 stores and record numbers of online deliveries.

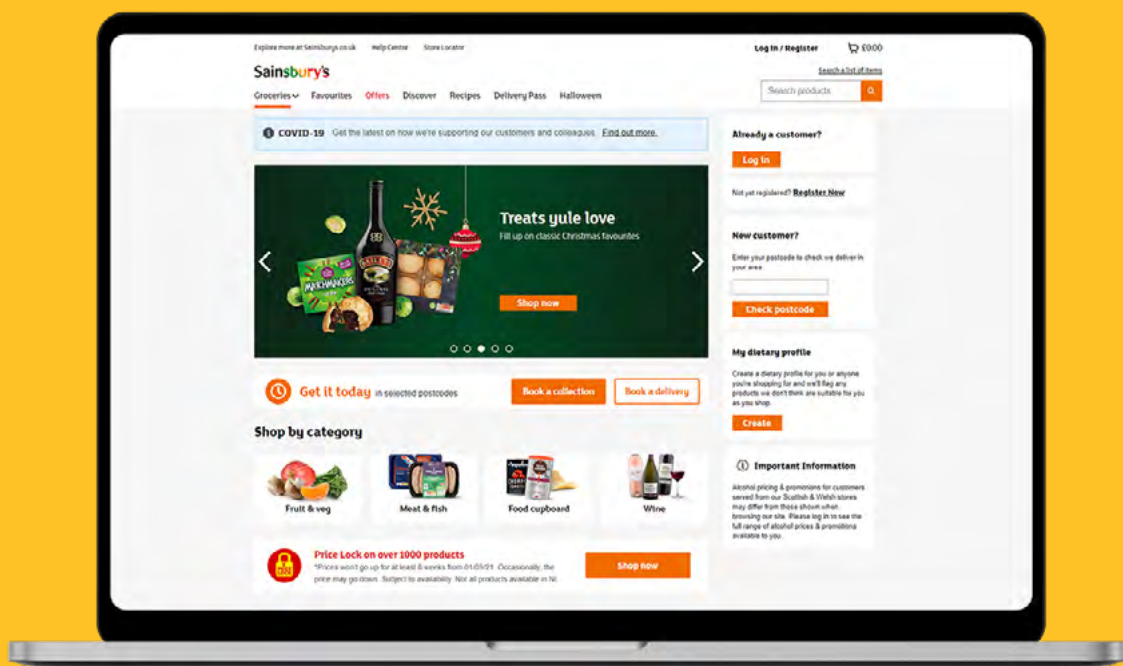
Following Sainsbury's acquisition of Home Retail Group in 2016 their digital presence now includes Sainsbury's, Argos, Tu clothing, and Habitat. The acquisition also introduced new CMSs to Sainsbury's technology landscape that the team wanted to consolidate to ensure a seamless, convenient shopping experience, brand consistency, and employee efficiency.

Argos' digital presence had been built on a headless architecture with Magnolia, decoupling the front end from the backend. Content was provided to the React front end via APIs and delivered across multiple

channels. The Argos implementation of Magnolia was selected as a foundation to onboard all other brands, aiming to retain each brand's identity while ensuring consistency of journeys and design.

As a result, Sainsbury's was able to achieve cost savings and increase customer KPIs. With content becoming easier to manage and publish than ever before, the teams also reported higher efficiencies and employee satisfaction working with the platform.

Creating the ecommerce experience that modern consumers want and expect can be challenging without the right infrastructure. We hope that with this guide, your brand can follow in the footsteps of Sainsbury's and so many more in combining content and commerce to overcome the challenges of delivering the modern commerce experience.





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